

792 sugar cane. To refuse to contribute food for the maintenance of the bird-man
688 was an offence which could be punished by the burning of one's house. The
bird-man dropped his old name and adopted a new one, mysteriously revealed
[551] to him; it became also the name of the year. Thus the bird cult was the basis
805] for a convenient system of chronology.

All those who, like the missionaries, were on Easter Island when the bird
792 cult was functioning, stress the violence which inevitably followed the selec-
554 tion of the bird-man. They imply that he had temporal powers similar to
643 those of a chief. Ollivier (165, vol. 39, p. 256) states that the bird-man had
661 "tyrannic power." "The defeated are shamefully relegated to a corner of the
island where they starve and die because of cold. With the installment of
the new power, burnings and plunderings start. Woe to the man who owns
some sweet potatoes or chickens. The chief [bird-man] with his followers
will fall upon the houses like birds of prey."

Gana (86, p. 33) was told, probably by the missionaries, that the bird-
man was an "important chief whose functions last a year" and whose attri-
butes were of a military nature. Roussel (190, p. 427) writes that the bird-man
had authority for daily and nightly marauding and the fooling of the people
and for "spending the year in continuous childish and wanton feasts." During
the harvest feasts "the *mata-toa* [bird-men] left their caves of the Mataveri
mountain," and swooped down like vultures upon everything which suited
them (190, p. 428). Rarely did these feasts pass without trouble, since the
mata-toa quarreled about the booty. The man who was designated by Make-
make as bird-man for the year was entitled to a large share of the food dis-
tributed at feasts.

792 Routledge gives no hint of the military sway of the bird-man, such as
661 implied by missionary accounts. Perhaps there is some connection between
the acts of violence recorded by early observers and the statement by one of
Routledge's informants that those who did not contribute food to the bird-
man were punished by having their houses burned. Perhaps the bitterness of
the defeat or the insolence of the victorious group led to serious arguments and
even war. Evidence given by the last of the surviving contenders or by wit-
nesses of the bird cult stress the dread consequences these contests had on the
peace of the island.

792 The old men who informed Routledge gave her 86 names of bird-men;
173 probably most of these names were also those of the years when each man
was made *tangata-manu*. Routledge (194, p. 226) remarks that "chronological
sequence was achieved with fair certainty for eleven years prior to the final
celebration at Orongo. In addition to the bird-name, the name of both winner
and *hopu* were ascertained, with those of their respective clans." When
Tepano's paternal uncle, Rue, became *tangata-manu*, he gave his bird-name,